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ABSTRACT

At the beginning of his tenure in 1987, the superintendent of Clear Creek School District (Colorado) found that the district had no written K-12 curriculum, no ongoing process for developing such a curriculum, and no systematic process for staff development. To provide for change based on projected student needs for the 21st century, the superintendent, in cooperation with students, parents, nonparent citizens, and educators, devised a strategic planning process which eventually led to the development of the Five-Year Strategic Plan for school improvement. The process included the following components: (1) curriculum development and monitoring; (2) staff development for teachers focusing on current research and instructional practice; (3) alternative education for students whose needs are not being met in the regular classroom; (4) training for parents to support mathematics skills at home; (5) team building for students, parents, staff, and community; (6) training for parents, staff, and community in site-based management skills; (7) training for teachers and administrators in alternative forms of assessing student achievement; and (8) facilitator training for staff and administrators. This paper presents: a description of the school district, a brief history of the planning process, results, and future directions. (IAH)

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BEYOND STAFF DEVELOPMENT: A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SCHOOL/COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

A Showcase Presentation For
The National Council of States on Inservice Education

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in
Houston, Texas

by

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I. Introduction

As technology accelerates the rate of change in all social systems, many of us have a tendency to cry foul, to say, "Stop the world; I want to get off!" As Tom Peters (1988) suggests, "The world has not just 'turned upside down.' It is turning in every which way at an accelerating pace." In the public schools we plead for more money, more time, and more patience. If only we could take the time to develop a strategy, a plan... But we are often too absorbed in our day-to-day problem solving to pause either to reflect or to project. Rather than seeing our world as a whole, as Senge (1990) suggests would be more efficient and overall more beneficial, we fragment our analyses of our problems. We point fingers. It must be someone's fault. We can't (or don't) pause from daily operations long enough to develop real strategies, truly long range plans. After all, isn't that what we pay the planners to do, and why aren't they doing it? As one teacher in an affluent Colorado school district shared with me recently, "It's not our principal's fault. It may be the superintendent, or the governor, or the president, or the community - who knows? And none of us can control those forces!"

This sense of frustration is further magnified in small school districts which have few if any dollars to employ planners, few if any dollars for extra clerical staff, and "apparently" no means of freeing teachers for long range strategic planning. Like many social institutions, these smaller school districts are overwhelmed by the rapid pace of change. And as Theobald (1987) points out, not only the problems but the answers themselves have become increasingly complex. As employers increase productivity, they risk increasing unemployment. As environmentalists seek to protect our planet, they jeopardize our daily livelihood. If educators achieve state-mandated standards, they may be forced to ignore the uniqueness of the individual. Theobald further suggests, however, that the true challenge embedded in these turbulent times is to see conflict as a challenge to creative thinking, to live within our environmental and ecological limits, to recognize modern technology as freeing us from many mundane tasks, and to provide the possibility of dignity to all human beings.

Having been reared in a small, rural setting in a school district named for William Holmes McGuffey, I was exposed to the concept of eclecticism at a very early age - although I must admit that I thought his was an "electric" reader until I had my first educational philosophy course. And now many years later, having read Kolb (1984), Keirsey and Bates (1984) and others, I find that I have become an eclectic - or as the modern writers might say, a right-brain ENFP.

It is with this eclectic background in mind that I set out almost five years ago to ask what Senge (1990) has now clarified for me, "Why blame people and institutions? How do our own internal relationships affect people's behavior over time?"

This concept has guided the planning process in Clear Creek School District Re-1 in Idaho Springs, Colorado, and it has led to this National Council of States on Inservice Education

showcase program. Of course, the entire litany of events involved in this process cannot be presented in this report, nor is it perhaps necessary to do so. Instead this presentation is divided into four sections as follows: 1) **A Description of Clear Creek School District**, 2) **A Brief History of the Planning Process**, 3) **Results**, and 4) **Future Directions.**

II. A Description of Clear Creek School District

Almost 90% of the school districts in the United States enroll 10,000 or fewer students. As the 80's and 90's have ushered in criticisms of the public schools, more regulations relative to special education, gender equity, expectations for gifted-and-talented, and tighter budgets, many small school district superintendents have asked, "Where do we find the funds or the expertise to conduct long range strategic planning?" While I am not suggesting that Clear Creek School District has fully answered this question, we have taken a first step in that direction. Furthermore, as the description of our school district attests, we are not large, we do not have a planning department, and we are not wealthy.

Clear Creek County is located in the north central part of Colorado, 34 miles west of Denver. With Jefferson County as its eastern boundary and the Continental Divide as its western boundary, the County has a total area of 395 square miles - 25 miles at its extreme length and 20 miles in width.

A small ski resort and other recreational and tourist attractions draw many visitors to the County throughout the year. Mineral resources have played a significant role in the County's economy since its establishment in the gold rush days. Other economic resources include lumbering, minimal crop and livestock production, and trade and service industries.

The population of the County is presently estimated to be 7,619. Average annual income is $19,032. Residents live in the unincorporated areas of Evergreen and Floyd Hills, in the cities of Downieville, Dumont, Empire, Georgetown (County Seat), Idaho Springs, Lawson, and Silver Plume, and in various rural areas throughout the County. Approximately 36% of all residents have children in school, and approximately 12% are senior citizens over age 55. Nearly 16% work in the Denver Metro Area. Population growth for the County was projected by a 1988 study to be slow over the next five to ten years.

Current school enrollment stands at approximately 1385 students. Elementary students (K-6) are housed in three buildings. Middle school and high school students are housed in a joint facility in Idaho Springs. All but one building are overcrowded and in need of renovation.

Historical enrollments by school from 1979 through 1990 follow:

Table 1

SCHOOL	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Gtn/Emp	261	256	263	264	275	229	240	251	235	235	222
Carlson	486	531	395	372	361	389	377	377	365	344	353
K-Murphy	Jeffco Tuit		206	211	202	208	227	239	239	243	226
Secndry	538	567	615	622	580	594	613	573	364 225*	354 224*	386 196*
Totals	1285	1354	1469	1469	1418	1420	1457	1440	1428	1402	1383

*Numbers reflect the separation of high school and middle school students.

Based on enrollment projections developed by the Colorado Department of Education, our most accurate projections over the past five years, we are anticipating the following enrollments for 1991-1995:

Table 2

School	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Georgetown	173	174	174	173	175
Empire	54	54	54	54	55
Carlson	347	350	349	348	352
King-Murphy	232	233	233	232	234
Middle School	218	218	211	217	200
High School	387	387	413	400	404
TOTALS	1,411	1,416	1,434	1,424	1,420

As of May, 1990, the certificated staff included 91 full time employees, 29 males and 62 females. Their average teaching experience prior to Clear Creek is 2.3 years, and their average tenure at Clear Creek is 10.7 years. Their average age is 41.2 years, and their educational levels are as follows:

BA = 6	BA+15 = 14	BA+45 = 22
MA = 22	MA+20 = 12	MA+40 = 15

The average teacher salary is $30,008.

Currently we employ 80 support staff employees. They are employed by category as follows:

Custodial = 12	Educational Assistants = 29	Food Service = 13
Maintenance = 4	Secretaries = 10	Transportation = 12

The average age of the support staff is 45 years, their average tenure with the district is 7.5 years, and their average salary is $12,395.

The district employs the following administrative and supervisory personnel:

Superintendent = 1	Assistant Superintendent = 1
Principals = 5	Supervisors = 3

The average tenure of these individuals within the district is 10.2 years, and their average salary is $46,347.

While the future of Clear Creek School District Re-1 or any other organization is not totally predictable, the County's population seems to be relatively stable and should provide stable school enrollments over the next five years. It is difficult to determine how small stakes gambling in nearby Central City and Black Hawk will affect our County, but this is a potentially volatile factor in terms of schools and other community services. With the instability of state and federal funding, it may be difficult for the school district to maintain current programs and services. It will also be difficult to develop contingency plans until some of the financial factors around state funding become more predictable. Nevertheless, we must continue to focus on new, more efficient methods of delivering educational programs and services.

III. A Brief History of the Planning Process

A. Background

When I became superintendent of Clear Creek School District in 1987, there existed no K-12 written curriculum, no ongoing process for developing such a curriculum, and no systematic process for staff development. While standardized achievement test scores were above the national average, the district had been using the same edition of the test for almost ten years. While 70-75% of our students were pursuing some form of post-secondary education - 65% at four-year colleges and universities - no data had been gathered on the success of these students during or beyond college; nor did we know what was becoming of the other 25-30% of our graduates who were not following the college route. However, long range planning was at least a matter of discussion among the school board and several community groups.

During the 1987-88 school year I worked with the District Advisory Accountability Committee (DAAC) - students, parents, staff, and the community at large - to complete a planning process for the school district. While the process provided the structure for buildings and support staff departments to develop yearly goals and action plans, it assumed the continuation of existing philosophies and programs. Building Advisory Accountability Committees (BAAC) worked to improve "what is" rather than to structure "what could be." The process assumed the status-quo rather than providing for change based on projected student needs for the 21st Century. Nevertheless, it provided a mechanism to redefine our internal relationships.

Then during the 1989-90 and 1990-91 school years, I worked with the DAAC to expand this process into a Five Year Strategic Plan for school improvement. This strategic plan was completed and approved by the school board in June, 1991.

At its best Strategic Planning structures an improvement process driven by all elements of the school community - students, parents, non-parent citizens, and educators. At the outset of our efforts, we asked these participants to recognize Fullan's ten assumptions about change (1982) as follows:

1. Do not assume that your version of what the change should be is the one that should or could be implemented.
2. Assume that any significant innovation requires individual implementors to work out their own meaning.
3. Assume that conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable but fundamental to successful change.
4. Assume that people need pressure to change.
5. Assume that effective change takes time.
6. Do not assume that the reason for lack of implementation is outright rejection of

the values embodied in the change or hard-core resistance to all change.

7. Do not expect all or even most people to change.
8. Assume that you will need a plan which is based on the above assumptions and which addresses the factors known to affect implementation.
9. Assume that no amount of knowledge will ever make it totally clear what action should be taken.
10. Assume that change is a frustrating, discouraging business.

As we proceeded, we didn't always remember these assumptions, but we frequently brought them before the various groups for review. We reminded people that change is difficult and frustrating for students, parents, staff, and community. We also drew attention to Hall, Wallace, and Dosset's research (1972) on the six stages common to most change processes. These stages are listed below:

Stage 0	**Awareness**	Little concern or involvement with the innovation
Stage 1	**Information**	General awareness and interest in learning more
Stage 2	**Personal**	Uncertainty about the demands of the innovation, their adequacy to meet those demands, and their roles
Stage 3	**Management**	Focus on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources
Stage 4	**Consequences**	Focus on the impact of the innovation on students
Stage 5	**Collaboration**	Coordination and cooperation with others
Stage 6	**Refocusing**	Exploration of more universal benefits

By considering these assumptions about change and the stages which most change processes generally follow, we were better prepared to undertake a change process in our schools. It seems clear, however, that researchers are finding change to be an extremely difficult process to lead or to follow. Conflict over the direction that the change process should follow is not only inevitable but desirable. Change takes time and patience, and not everyone recognizes the need for change at the same time; nor, in fact, does everyone recognize the need for the same change. What the research seems to indicate, however, is that when people are involved in the decision making process regarding the change and are encouraged to proceed from one stage of the change process to the next with or without pressure, the change being sought has a much better chance of being implemented successfully.

According to Cook (1988) Strategic Planning is both a process and a discipline which concentrate an organization's resources on mutually predetermined, measurable goals. It is a way of projecting existing trends in order to guide current decisions toward the ends which we have set for our future. McCune (1986) further describes Strategic Planning as having both rational and psychological effects on an organization and the people involved in the planning process. This is certainly true for those of us who participated in this process for Clear Creek School District Re-1.

Education reform in Clear Creek County has evolved from many of the same pressures which have forced changes in public schools throughout the nation. There exists today a widespread perception that America is losing its competitive edge in science and technology to Japan and other foreign countries. As Cetron, Rocha, and Lucken point out, despite the fact that the median income in this country rose 4.5% from 1985 to 1986, despite the fact that the number of families earning $50,000 or more rose from 13% in 1970 to 18.3% in 1985, and despite the fact that the poor in this country number one in seven today as compared to one in five in 1960, the American people generally perceive themselves and this nation to be declining economically. They place much of the blame for this demise on the public schools, which they perceive to be failing in their responsibility for preparing young people to assume their roles in an increasingly technological work place (1988).

Business leaders have also chided the public schools, because they (business) must do what they see the schools as having failed to do, i.e., teach people to read. Over 75% of this country's major corporations now offer literary enhancement programs to their employees. It is estimated that over 45 million job holding Americans are either functional illiterates or marginally functional illiterates, and it is further estimated that illiteracy costs this nation $225 billion annually in lost industrial production, prisons, crime, and related social problems (The Futurist, 1988).

According to Cetron (1988) the world will continue to place ever increasing demands on those persons entering the work place over the next decade. Fewer jobs will be assembly line in nature, and virtually all jobs will require workers to perform some sort of information generation and processing activities. Moreover, by Cetron's estimates knowledge will double four times during that same ten year period.

At the same time the American people will experience a significant evolution in basic cultural values. Plummer (1989) has identified this change in many areas such as the shift from a "live to work" ethic to a "work to live" ethic. People are beginning to view their jobs not as an end in themselves but as a means to an end - a better quality of life. He further suggests that while in the past success has generally been gauged according to position and wealth, today success is defined in much more personal terms. The once popular concept of self-denial is being replaced by the concept of self-fulfillment. Hero worship and faith in institutions is giving way to a love of ideas and a sense of self-reliance. People are exchanging a sense of unparalleled growth for a sense of limits.

Thus, whether the American people like it or not, their world is changing, and many people believe that the public schools have failed to keep pace with these changes. In fact, the very nature of the changes themselves makes it increasingly difficult for public school personnel to determine exactly what their response to the changes should be. One might ask, for example, how much the shift in values from self-denial to self-fulfillment has led young people to take less interest in the rigors of school. Likewise, with the replacement of the traditional "school marm" with "real people" in the teaching ranks, one might speculate about the extent to which teachers now see their jobs as a life calling rather than as merely a

means to meet their own needs and goals. How much has the shift from hero worship and faith in institutions to love of ideas and self-reliance encouraged teachers to question the authority of administrators and boards of education? Finally, as the median age continues to rise and the school age population continues to decline (Cetron, 1985), how much will support for the public schools continue to wane?

As society evolves both in terms of technology and values, the pressure on schools to broaden their decision making base will accelerate. Teachers will not follow their leaders blindly (hero worship and faith in institutions). Parents will no longer simply trust the schools to make the right decisions regarding their children's education (faith in institutions). The non-parent public, furthermore, will become less likely to support public schools in which they have no direct voice in the decision making process. Because of an overwhelming sense of limits, people will expect the schools to operate more efficiently.

Beyond their impact on our district's mission, future trends may also affect school programs. Today a school's curriculum is as likely to be a part of a lay citizens discussion as it is to be a topic of a school district inservice workshop. More people seem to be questioning the ability of the public schools to respond to the needs of students and to the needs of an increasingly technological work place. Moreover, increasing numbers of lay citizens, whether parents, business leaders, or legislators, are demanding a voice in shaping the school's curriculum. At the same time, teachers are complaining that they too have been left out of the decision making process in terms of the curriculum. Thus, we see a growing impetus for more collaboration and shared decision making among all elements of the school community.

As Saphier, Bigda-Peyton, and Pierson (1989) point out, however, the move toward shared leadership in the public schools will not in itself solve the problems facing education today either in terms of meeting the demands of a rapidly changing society or even in coping with the complexities of change within the schools themselves. Meaningful and long lasting change, they suggest, depends on the structures employed as a part of the change process. It is these structures as created in Clear Creek School District which are described in this report.

B. Process

The primary purpose of this Strategic Planning Process has been to improve student achievement by empowering students, parents, staff, and the general community to participate more effectively in the education process in Clear Creek County. As a first step school/community groups participated in the development of the school district mission, philosophy, and goals. Then over a three year period the staff mapped existing curricula, and all groups participated in appropriate training and development programs to improve their awareness of and skills in new teaching/learning research and practice.

Although the process has primarily focused on the Clear Creek School District and community, it has also utilized Red Rocks Community College programs and staff as well as various private consultants. Training activities have included students, parents, staff, and the general community.

The major premise of the program has been that all students can master basic skills if they are provided appropriate instruction, appropriate support and motivation, and adequate time. A second assumption has been that people are more likely to support program decisions when they are involved in the decision making process. Finally, we concluded that the extent to which students, parents, staff, and the community could work effectively toward school improvement depended on the level of training and support they received in terms of their various responsibilities.

After seventeen years in education - teacher, building administrator, assistant superintendent, and superintendent - I had spent years considering Ralph Tyler's Bsic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction (1949). When I arrived in Clear Creek County in 1987, I began to piece together Tyler's message in a fashion which I believed could be useful for me and for the school district. Although I had previously presented numerous state and national workshops on parts of the process, it was not until 1987 that four questions emerged to unite these disparate parts into a meaningful process for implementing change. These four questions are as follows:

1) Why do we exist - our mission, philosophy, and goals?
2) What curricular and co-curricular programs do we provide as a means of accomplishing our mission, philosophy, and goals?
3) How do we deliver our programs - instructional and support delivery systems?
4) To what extent are we achieving our mission, philosophy, and goals and to what extent are our programs and delivery systems contributing to those outcomes?

To answer these four questions, our planning process actually evolved along two levels. At one level the DAAC worked with the BAAC's to develop a written mission statement and to re-evaluate the district's philosophy and goals relative to that mission. Throughout this phase of the process, the DAAC included input from all elements of the school community and sought reactions to their work as it evolved.

At the same time, the staff began to map the existing curriculum and to commit it to writing. (See Johnson, 1989.) This process has been ongoing since 1987, with curriculum guides being placed on computer disks to facilitate review and up-dating. In 1988 a group of teachers and administrators also planned and implemented a staff development process to assure that the staff was aware of the latest and best research pertaining to instructional delivery. (See Johnson, 1990.)

Overall the process included the following sub-programs:

1. Curriculum development and monitoring - This Curriculum Development and Monitoring Process consists of three phases: 1) developing a written curriculum which can be keyed to teachers' daily lesson plans if so desired, 2) monitoring curriculum implementation through a learning outcomes checklist, and 3) analyzing the congruence among the written, taught, tested, and learned curricula. All certificated staff have participated in this process.

2. Training for teachers in current research and instructional practice which enhances strategies to assure that "all" students achieve - This staff development process, known as Enhancing Instructional Delivery, was a five week program (one day per week) which was developed and facilitated by teachers and administrators. Participants were presented information on learning styles and modalities, 4-MAT, a review of Madeline Hunter's Theory into Practice, human growth and development theory, cooperative learning, questioning techniques, meta-cognition, and collaboration. They discussed and practiced strategies during each session and were coached by administrators in their own classrooms between sessions. All certificated staff participated in this program over a three year period. During the 1991-92 school year individuals and building staffs will choose one or more areas of the program to develop in more depth as they deem appropriate for their site.

3. Alternative education for students whose needs are not being met in the regular classroom - One alternative has been a postsecondary options agreement with Red Rocks Community College which articulates community college and high school courses, allowing students to earn credit from both institutions for those courses. (This program is leading toward a tech-prep concept for the 1991-92 school year which could allow students to earn from 15 to 30 community college credits by the time they graduate from high school.) Each high school student also completes an individualized graduation plan with the help of parents and the counselor. The plan is monitored by a homeroom teacher, and each student keeps an ongoing portfolio of work. Training for homeroom teachers was provided by the high school counselor. Remediation, tutoring, and some coursework for at-risk students are handled through the Alternative Curricular Education program which was showcased by the National School Boards Association at their 1990 convention. A recent Title III grant will bring full-interactive video to connect Clear Creek High School to two out-of-district high schools and Red Rocks Community College during the 1991-92 school year.

4. Training for parents to support mathematics skills at home - This training has been provided through a Family Math project where parents learn how to work with their children at home to support math skills learned at school. It is facilitated by a principal and several teachers in one elementary school.

5. Team building for students, parents, staff, and community - Team building began with the Board and administration using the "True Colors" temperament concepts. During

the 1991-92 school year staff, students, and community groups will be trained in this process and will use their newly acquired skills to assure inclusion of various opinions in developing building visions, group responsibilities for student learning, alternative teaching strategies, and alternative forms of student evaluation.

6. Training for parents, staff, and community in site-based management skills - This training was a two day intensive workshop provided by the National Clearinghouse on Site-based Management for 20 people, including all buildings, throughout the school district. A site-based management steering committee will begin setting parameters for this process during the 1991-92 school year.

7. Training for teachers and administrators in alternative forms of assessing student achievement - This process has led to pretest - posttest and portfolio approaches to student assessment to compliment standardized achievement test data. Staff has begun pilot studies of alternative assessments in five of nine state prescribed areas such as aesthetics, communications, and human and physical health to be carried out during the 1991-92 school year.

8. Facilitator training for staff and administrators - In September, 1991, two teachers from each site and their administrators were trained in group facilitation techniques. One site plans to focus their staff development in this area for the coming year.

A timeline for the evolution of the planning process appears as follows:

	Level 1 (DAAC)	Level 2 (Staff)
1987-88	Initial Planning Process Completed	Curriculum Mapping Begins
1988-89	Initial Planning Process Implemented	Curriculum Mapping Continues; Enhancing Instructional Delivery (Districtwide Staff Development) Begins
1989-90	Development of 5-Year Strategic Plan Begins	K-12 Curriculum Committed to Writing; Enhancing Instructional Delivery Continues
1990-91	5-Year Strategic Plan Completed	Team Building and Sight-based Management Training Begin

Thus far, the superintendent has been the primary leader/manager of the Strategic Planning

Process. I advise the Board of Education, sit on the DAAC, and lead the administrative team and staff in implementing the process, including curriculum and staff development. To ensure balanced input, however, the DAAC and BAAC's have their own chairs and reserve the right to present alternative opinions to the Board. Programmatic decisions are implemented through the yearly building action plans. Policy recommendations evolve from staff individually, through their various representative groups, or through the BAAC and DAAC. All plans are expected to be consistent with the district mission, policies, and procedures. If policy or procedure changes need to be made in order to promote opportunities to improve instruction, the staff through the BAAC's can bring recommendations to the DAAC and superintendent, who may recommend such changes to the board.

As student outcomes are developed during the 1991-92 school year, programmatic decisions should become increasingly flexible and site-based. The Strategic Plan calls for this process to be further refined in the coming year to include written decision-making procedures in each building. The Plan provides for the BAAC to develop site policies and procedures consistent with the district mission, policies, and procedures. The DAAC will act as the steering committee to oversee this process. The superintendent will still maintain veto power, and the ultimate decision in any matter will continue to rest with the School Board. Once student outcomes have been established and building visions and various group responsibilities relative to student learning have been developed, each building will be given a greater portion of curriculum and staff development money to spend according to their own needs. The DAAC will establish parameters for this process with an emphasis on curriculum development linked to student outcomes in nine state prescribed areas. There will also be an emphasis on staff development linked to teacher needs in terms of new programs and necessary changes in teaching strategies. Clients will be represented on every committee, and the School Board will maintain a place on each agenda for staff and citizen input. We hope that the recent team-building efforts using "True Colors" will enhance this process.

In terms of funding, each year the introduction to the General Fund budget of the district includes a list of allocations based on goals identified through the Planning Process, including curriculum and staff development. To assure a fair distribution of funds, curriculum planning is based on a five year cycle with a different subject receiving funding for major textbook and other program expenditures in the year following their needs assessment and planning year.

To assure that site-based procedures, curriculum development, and staff development focus on student needs and the district mission, various forms of assessment will be developed to measure student achievement in each of the nine areas on a systematic, ongoing basis. Again, as the students, parents, staff, and community become more involved and more responsible for particular aspects of student progress, we will be better prepared to share the accountability for reaching our district mission. Eventually there may even be budgetary incentives for improving student achievement. Obviously, sites where students achieve will

gain more latitude in all areas of decision-making.

IV. Results

This change process was never designed to be studied empirically. We cannot say with certainty the extent to which our Strategic Planning Process has contributed to the results listed here. Nevertheless, we have experienced significant changes in our school district, and we believe we are well on our way to restructuring our schools to meet the needs of our students as we enter the 21st Century.

During the first three years of the process rapid change actually had a negative impact on staff morale. However, in the past year a survey by a team building consultant indicated that staff was becoming more trustful of administrators and the Board. Likewise, staff has become more involved in various staff development projects and has begun suggesting significant changes themselves, i.e., block scheduling and interdisciplinary instruction at the high school. Elementary teachers have asked to explore non-graded strategies for primary students, and team building activities have been very positively received by students, parents, staff, and the community.

On the job performance has improved in terms of learning options being provided for students. Teachers use curriculum outcome statements as a basis for textbook selection and analysis of student achievement. Teachers have volunteered for summer workshops, after which they have trained peers.

Because of this process we now have many more program options for students. These include elementary guidance, alternative education for at-risk and gifted-and-talented students, individual graduation plans at the high school level, a postsecondary options partnership with a local community college, and a new computer lab for which we spent in excess of $100,000. We are also participating in a $2,000,000 partnership with a community college and two neighboring school districts which will connect our institutions with full-interactive video, and we are participating in a $25,000 grant to improve the practical applications of higher level math and science courses. Recently, our K-12 science team moved toward a more "hands-on" approach to science.

While we are currently developing alternative forms of student assessment, we have some data to support improved learner outcomes. First, our high school drop-out rate has remained under 3% for three consecutive years - down from 5.9%. In fact, in 1990-91 the dropout rate was 1.8%. Our SAT and ACT scores remain above the national average, and 65% of our students go on to 4 year colleges - another 10% to 2 year and technical schools. Our attendance rate remains above 94% in all buildings, and in 1990-91 our graduation rate reached 93.3%. (Note: the incongruence between graduation and dropout rates results from

different state formulas for calculating these figures.)

Other student achievement data appears below:

COMPREHENSIVE TEST OF BASIC SKILLS
MEAN NORMAL CURVE EQUIVALENT
1989-90

TABLE 3

Subject/ Category	Grade 2 M F	Grade 5 M F	Grade 7 M F	Grade 9 M F
Reading	60.7 52.7	51.9 57.5	58.1 56.1	58.4 59.2
Reading (Anglo)	N/A	N/A	58.0	60.2
Reading (Non-anglo)	N/A	N/A	40.5	38.8
Math	57.6 51.5	46.8 54.7	53.0 52.8	54.8 52.7
Math (Anglo)	N/A	N/A	53.3	55.7
Math (Non-anglo)	N/A	N/A	34.6	35.2

COMPREHENSIVE TEST OF BASIC SKILLS
MEAN NORMAL CURVE EQUIVALENT
1990-91

TABLE 4

Subject/ Category	Grade 3 M F	Grade 6 M F	Grade 8 M F	Grade 10 M F
Reading	53.7 59.1	55.8 61.2	58.6 61.7	59.6 60.6
Reading (Anglo)	N/A	N/A	61.3	62.1
Reading (Non-anglo)	N/A	N/A	41.0	46.0
Math	50.7 54.7	55.5 57.7	53.7 53.1	53.9 52.2
Math (Anglo)	N/A	N/A	54.3	55.5
Math (Non-anglo)	N/A	N/A	42.8	39.7

The two tables above indicate improved student achievement overall in reading and mathematics. Table 5 below summarizes this growth by sub-group.

DIFFERENCES IN MEAN NORMAL CURVE EQUIVALENT SCORES
COMPREHENSIVE TEST OF BASIC SKILLS
1989-90 VS 1990-91

TABLE 5

Sub-group	Grade 3	Grade 6	Grade 8	Grade 10
Reading				
Males	-6.0	3.9	0.5	1.2
Females	6.4	3.7	3.3	1.4
Anglo	N/A	N/A	3.3	1.9
Non-anglo	N/A	N/A	0.5	7.2
Mathematics				
Male	-6.9	8.7	0.7	-0.9
Female	3.2	3.0	0.3	-0.5
Anglo	N/A	N/A	1.0	-0.2
Non-anglo	N/A	N/A	8.2	4.5

As Table 5 indicates, scores of grade three males declined significantly in both reading and mathematics. Grade three female scores, on the other hand, improved beyond the 2% goal established for 1990-91. Considering anything less than (+) or (-) one to be no change, eighth grade males and non-anglo scores were unchanged in reading, while eighth grade female and anglo reading scores improved beyond the 2% goal. In eighth grade mathematics both male and female scores remained relatively unchanged, anglo scores improved by less than the 2% goal, and non-anglo scores improved significantly. Finally, at grade ten non-anglo scores exceeded the 2% growth goal in both reading and mathematics. While tenth grade male, female, and anglo scores improved in reading, they did not reach the 2% growth goal. Except for the non-anglo scores previously mentioned, all other tenth grade mathematics scores remained unchanged.

Although scores indicate improvement in non-anglo performance overall, this sub-group's scores continue to lag significantly behind anglo scores. This is a problem which bears attention in the coming year.

Writing scores are also improving as indicated by the following table.

WRITING ASSESSMENT SCORES
BY
PRIMARY TRAIT METHOD
(FOUR POINT SCALE)
Grade Five/Narrative

TABLE 6

Carlson		George/Empire		King-Murphy	
1990	1991	1990	1991	1990	1991
2.67	2.77	2.08	2.83	2.88	2.96

Thus, several accomplishments have evolved from this Strategic Planning Process. The first significant accomplishment has been the development of a district mission, philosophy, and goals which become the touchstone for everything else that happens in our schools. A second accomplishment has been the establishment of written course guides to define the existing curriculum. These guides have forced people to analyze what they really teach, and many staff members are advocating changes. A third accomplishment has been the development of 21st Century expectations for our students. These expectations, arising from the Strategic Planning Process and dictating future directions, will assist us in developing student outcomes in nine state prescribed areas and will help us design necessary program changes.

A fourth accomplishment has been the training processes, beginning with the EID process cited earlier and continuing with family math and the more recent team-building workshops. All groups will now be better prepared to assume responsibilities for student learning.

Finally, increased involvement of students, parents, staff, and community in the education process has empowered all groups. As the shift to site-based management continues, we expect more commitment to excellence in every aspect of our program.

V. Future Directions

This Strategic Planning Process provides what many organizations only dream of - a process whereby students, parents, staff, and the general community can be trained and encouraged to participate in the education process within our public schools. By forcing staff development decisions to arise from student and program expectations, we assure that the district mission drives process rather than the other way around. The process establishes a cycle of training school/community groups to participate in the decision-making structure of

their schools so that they are better equipped to recognize future trends, societal demands on students, and the importance of high expectations for student achievement. Then as they become more involved in the process, they can analyze the extent to which existing programs are appropriate to student needs and societal expectations. Ultimately they will begin to determine their own needs in terms of further training and development.

The process empowers all groups and provides a structure which should outlive any one superintendent or school board. Consequently, staff and parents can feel secure about program consistency. Moreover, they have more systematic criteria against which to evaluate existing programs or the creation of new programs. The ultimate question relative to any program or staff development cut or expansion now becomes, "How does the program or process impact student achievement and satisfaction?"

It is also important to note that several sub-programs arising from this planning process have received recognition. The curriculum monitoring process was presented at the NCSIE Convention in 1989 as an example of site-based decision-making. The elementary guidance program was showcased by the Colorado Association of School Boards at their summer conference in 1989. The "change" portion of the process was presented to the Collegial Association for the Development and Renewal of Educators Conference in 1989 as an example of an effective change process. The secondary alternative education program was showcased by the National School Boards Association at their Convention in 1990. Finally, the new postsecondary options partnership with Red Rocks Community College has been presented to the Colorado Inter-agency Conference in 1991 and has since become the model in this area throughout Colorado. The superintendent also received the Red Rocks Community College Outstanding Citizenship Award for his role in developing the options concept.

This Strategic Planning Process, therefore, is achieving significant recognition and concrete results. Our drop-out rate has remained below 3% for three consecutive years while the national rate stands at 25%. In short, this Program has made a difference for young people.

We recognize that further change will not be attained without the positive commitment of <u>all</u> students, parents, non-parent citizens, and educators throughout the County. We also recognize that these plans will take time to unfold and may require the district budget to be focused in new directions. Finally, we recognize that all elements of the school community must be willing to define their responsibilities relative to the implementation of this Strategic Plan.

We believe that students, parents, non-parent citizens, and educators should work cooperatively in areas relative to the school district's mission and to some extent in areas relative to assessing our achievement toward accomplishing that mission. However, while all groups should be provided an opportunity to react to program and delivery matters, we believe these areas are primarily the responsibility of school district personnel.

We have outlined below a five year Strategic Plan for implementing our recommendations. This outline, which is followed by a brief explanation of key points, assumes that each building/department will continue to enact yearly plans as a part of the planning process.

A FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR
CLEAR CREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-1
1991-1996

YEAR	MISSION	PROGRAMS	DELIVERY SYSTEMS	ASSESSMENT
1991-92	-Vision by building/dept. -Team Building -Decision Making plans -State & National Goals	-Outcomes - 4, 8, 12	-Pilot Scheduling -Explore Instruct. Models and Integration Strat. based on EID & Other research -Revise Pln. Proc. -Update Policies & Proc. -Bond Election	-Pilot Areas of Assessment -Explore Alternative Assess. -Improve CTBS Scores in reading, math, & language by 2% per year until all fall at or above 65%tile
1992-93	-Shared Leader. -Communications	-Course Restructuring -Technology -Foreign Lang.	-Facilities Construct. -Implement New Models on Pilot Basis by Building	-Report and Refine
1993-94	-Continue Above processes	-Pilot Course restructuring	-Support Staff Develop. for integration & restructuring	-Continue Refinement by Building
1994-95	" "	-Implement Courses	-Explore early childhd. programs -Assess Impact of staff development	-Pilot K-12 System
1995-96	-Assess Teamwork & Communica.	-Assess Course Appropriateness	" "	-Implement to Assess Progress

These strategies as outlined above are reasonable and achievable. The outline begins in 1991 with a goal relative to the school district's mission. Each area to the right of the mission column - program, delivery systems, and assessment - then builds on the column before it, i.e., we renew our emphasis on our mission, examine programs to determine their appropriateness to that mission, adjust systems and services for delivering those programs, and assess the extent to which we are achieving our goals. Likewise, each year also builds on the previous year.

The plan itself will need to be updated on an ongoing basis so that we continue to plan five years in advance. Thus, as we implement our strategies in 1991, we will need to adjust years 1992-93 through 1995-96 and stretch our thinking into the 1996-97 school year. The plan is described in more detail below.

1991 - 1992

Our goals relative to the school district's mission in 1991 focus on building a vision for each building/operational department, continuing team building efforts, clarifying decision making structures and processes at both the building/department level and at the district level, and continuing efforts toward achieving the national and state goals for education. All participants within the school community - students, parents, non-parent citizens, and educators - should know and appreciate the school district's mission. The test of this goal, however, goes beyond rote memorization. People should be able to state the mission in their own words. But more than this, if they are to act on this mission, they need to create a vision of their part in accomplishing it. Toward this end, the DAAC suggests that each building/department proceed somewhat as follows:

Step 1: Working with groups representing students (where age appropriate), parents, non-parent citizens, and educators (through the BAAC where appropriate), each principal/department supervisor might ask individuals to describe their personal responsibilities relative to accomplishing the school district mission. Then using these personal statements, each building/department should build a vision of their piece of that overall mission, i.e., Carlson Elementary School will be contributing appropriately to the school district mission when...(listing several key indicators in come measurable form). This vision should be accompanied by a list of responsibilities for each group participating in that building/department, i.e., in order to achieve our vision, students must..., parents must..., non-parent citizens must..., teachers must..., administrators must..., etc.

Step 2: The school district should support the team building process by continuing to provide funds for a team building consultant. This person should work both on a districtwide and a building/department basis as needed to assist people in improving internal and external communications along with their overall effectiveness. As a part of this process, buildings/departments should describe the

decision making process for their unit. The process, which should be reduced to writing, should indicate who is involved in various types of decisions, the extent of their involvement, whether they provide advice or participate in the final decision, etc. This is a description of what currently exists and may not be viewed by all participants as the ideal process. To remind all participants of our ultimate responsibility, we should stress that the bottom line measure of effectiveness is student achievement; therefore, we need to measure our decision making process and all other efforts according to the extent to which we accomplish district, state, and national goals. This process may require some staff development in consensus building and/or other types of decision making processes.

Step 3: Each building will participate in the districtwide effort to develop performance outcomes for students at grades 4, 8, and 12 in the following nine categories: aesthetics, careers, communications, human relations, multicultural understanding, physical/emotional health, reasoning/problem solving, science/technology, and social responsibility. This project can be handled most effectively through the curriculum inservice days with some preparatory work handled through buildings staffs and districtwide committees. Ultimately, the outcomes should be research-based and should be consistent with state and national goals for education. Participation in the Governor's "2000 Plan" might be appropriate here.

Step 4: With a tremendous amount of work having been done in the area of staff development, building/departments should begin to explore ways to move this process to their own sites. The certificated staff should base their staff development on concepts from EID or on some other research pertinent to building or district goals. Such explorations should consider appropriate methods for integrating handicapped children into the regular classroom, and should include methods for bringing parents of handicapped and non-handicapped students together to promote cooperation and decrease potential tensions between these groups. Each building/department should submit a written plan for staff development to be approved by the superintendent as a rationale for receiving staff development funds.

Step 5: The superintendent should work with the DAAC to update the district Planning Process to make it consistent with existing practice and timelines. The superintendent should also work with the Certificated and Support Staff Communications Committees to update Board Policies and Administrative Procedures. A realistic goal might be to complete one section of the Policy Manual each year.

Step 6: The district's counselors/psychologists should coordinate efforts to improve CTBS scores and to explore alternative forms of assessment. Each building might choose a particular assessment area (from the nine outcome areas) or type of assessment to explore and pilot. Again, these assessments should relate to how well we are accomplishing our district mission and should focus on observable/measurable student performance. We should strive to improve CTBS scores by 2%tile per year until reading, language, and mathematics scores fall at or above the 65%tile in grades 3, 6, 8, and 10.

Step 7: A bond election should be held in October for needed renovations of facilities. Construction should begin as soon as possible after the bond is approved by the voters.

1992 - 1993

Step 1: By the end of the 91-92 school year, the district and each building/department should have completed a written description of their decision making processes. Again, these are merely descriptions of what is rather than what should be. In 92-93, therefore, we should begin to consider the extent to which leadership is being, and/or should be, shared among the various participants - students, parents, non-parents, teachers, administrators, and Board. It is, of course, the Board which must ultimately decide how much of their decision making responsibilities they wish to share with other groups and how such shared decision making might be accomplished.

Step 2: With student outcomes having been completed in 91-92, buildings will need to focus on the potential need to restructure programs in order to address these outcomes appropriately. The DAAC wishes to emphasize the significance of foreign languages and technology in this process.

Step 3: Just as programs may need to be restructured to coincide with the newly designed student outcomes, so too may our delivery systems require restructuring. Since teachers will have explored instructional models and integration concepts during the 91-92 school year, they should pilot various strategies in 92-93. The DAAC wishes to emphasize the need for continued district support for staff development as these new systems are piloted. The Committee also wishes to emphasize the need for all staff to explore the use of technology to enhance instructional delivery through direct instruction, record keeping, and home-school communications.

Step 4: The various building projects relative to assessment should be reported, and efforts should begin toward the development of a K-12 assessment battery which addresses standardized testing, alternative forms of assessment in all nine student outcome areas mentioned above, and surveys of high school graduates. This battery might ultimately assess certain academic skills in grades 3, 6, 8, and 10, for example, and then assess self-esteem at grades K, 4, 7, and 12, etc. Such a plan should be operational by 1996.

1993 - 1994

Step 1: The 1993-94 school year should be a year for piloting and refinement. The exact nature of the goals in each of the four areas will depend to some extent on the progress made during 91-92 and 92-93. The purpose of the mission goal, of course, is to develop a sense of commitment among all school community groups

to the school district mission and to develop a system for sharing decision making responsibilities among these groups as is deemed appropriate. Course restructuring efforts will be designed to coordinate programs with our mission, delivery system restructuring efforts will be designed to facilitate program implementation, and refinements to the assessment process will be designed to measure more appropriately how our new systems and programs are actually affecting student achievement. The district will need to continue support for all of these processes through staff training and funding.

Step 2: It is important that all of the programs, systems, and processes piloted this year be analyzed and carefully evaluated by students, parents, non-parents, and educators with specific attention being given to their effects on student achievement. In the area of assessment we will need to utilize the assistance of measurement and evaluation experts to determine the validity and reliability of our assessment tools. Once our analyses have been completed, the various programs, processes, and systems should be appropriately modified before being implemented on a more or less permanent basis. Some ideas may even need to be completely reworked and piloted for an additional year.

1994 - 1995

Step 1: The 1994-1995 school year should be a year of implementation in the areas of mission, and programs. The extent to which the district will implement a shared leadership structure should be determined based on piloting from the previous year. Although the system will require continuous updating and refinement, it should be developed to the point of being clear and appropriate to the district's needs. This will be its first year beyond the piloting stage.

Step 2: Ideas for course restructuring should also have been piloted during the 93-94 school year and adjusted appropriately. During this year and next the assessment battery should become an increasingly critical element of the monitoring process.

Step 3: In the delivery systems and assessment areas 1994-95 will be a year to asses the processes themselves. While the bottom line in terms of assessment is student achievement, we need to determine the internal validity of our staff development and assessment processes. This can be accomplished by having teachers rate the staff development process and by having measurement experts continue their analyses and support of our assessment battery.

1995 - 1996

Step 1: This final year in the five year Strategic Plan should be devoted to assessments in all areas of the process. Questions which will need to be answered include, but are not limited to, the following: Are all elements of the school community

participating in the decision making structure of the school system both at the district and at the building/department levels according to clearly defined and understood written procedures? Are the various groups within the school community communicating effectively? Are all groups within the school community upholding their responsibilities relative to the school district's mission? Are programs appropriate to the district mission, i.e., are improvements to existing courses necessary and should some courses be added or deleted? Are our delivery systems appropriate to our programs and mission? Does our assessment battery effectively report data to the total school community relative to how we are achieving our school district mission?

Step 2: Although analysis and evaluation need to be an ongoing part of this strategic planning process during the 95-96 school year, the district needs to take a more in-depth look at our improvement efforts over the 1991 - 1996 period. This could be a year for a broad needs assessment of the total organization as we enter the final half of the decade of the 90's and prepare to enter the 21st Century.

The success of this Strategic Plan will depend on the ability and willingness of people to work together toward a common goal of school improvement. We cannot afford to treat our responsibility lightly. If the public schools do not or cannot deliver effective educational programs, people will turn to other sources to do the job for them. The time for action is now. We can and we must meet the bottom line - improved student achievement.

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